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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001311

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 2019/12/31
TAGS PREL, OVIP, ECON, KPAO
SUBJECT: (C) ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TAKES UMBRAGE AT WHA A/S
VALENZUELA'S REMARK REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S CONCERNS

DERIVED FROM: DSCG 05-1 B, D

1. (C) Summary: The GOA responded with heavy artillery to a remark WHA A/S Valenzuela made during a December 16 press roundtable. Immediately
2. (C) Immediately prior to departure from Buenos Aires on December 16, WHA A/S Valenzuela met at the Embassy with about a dozen Argentine pri
Media Zero In on Perceived Criticism

3. (C) Despite the broad range of issues addressed by A/S Valenzuela, Argentine media started focusing immediately after the roundtable almost
Kirchner Allies Take Umbrage

4. (C) The GOA response came swiftly. That same night, three GOA ministries publicly commented (in a clearly coordinated fashion) on the Valer

5. (C) Following the Randazzo statement, the Foreign Ministry issued a four-point communiqueC) saying that: (1) the generalized nature of the P

6. (C) The GOA's third statement on December 16 came from Justice Minister Julio Alak, who called Valenzuela's statements "unusual
and unjustified." Alak claimed that "rule of law is a fundamental asset in the country that has been protected and rescued from the more advers

7. (C) After the initial salvos, the GOA officials who met with Valenzuela chimed in. Vice Foreign Minister Victorio Taccetti (who received Ve

8. (C) Cabinet Chief AnC-bal FernClndez said, "We are not talking about a statement that comes from American businessmen, but of (Valenzuela's

9. (C) Argentine Ambassador to the United States HC)ctor Timerman appeared on television and in the press to claim that he had urged A/S Valer

10. (C) Argentine press reported that FM Jorge Taiana, who was in Copenhagen for the COP-15 meetings, used a brief pull-aside with Secretary C

11. (C) Former president Nestor Kirchner said "the statements by someone who should come with a different policy for Latin America are deplora
Opposition is Divided

12. (C) Reaction among the opposition was divided. Some, such as Santa Fe governor Hermes Binner, a highly regarded moderate Socialist and pos
Socialist Senator Ruben Giustiniani, who usually coincides with Binner, objected to any foreign official relaying any criticism of Argentina, w

Embassy Works to Smooth Feathers

13. (C) The Ambassador and other Country Team members used a December 17 reception for journalists to stress our desire to work constructively
GOA Tones Down Its Commentary

14. (C) The GOA's Telam news service sent December 18 a story that led with "Cabinet Chief Anibal Fernandez sought today to lower the tone on
AmCham Pleased with Press Coverage

15. (C) AmCham told post's Commercial Counselor that it was taking a positive response to press inquiries, talking up the positive contributic
Comment

16. (C) Once again, the Kirchner government has shown itself to be extremely thin-skinned and intolerant of perceived criticism. Concerns abou

17. (U) This cable was cleared by WHA A/S Valenquela.
MARTINEZ